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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, October 12, 1932

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Subject: "A Wednesday Dinner Menu." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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Shoulders make some of the nicest and least expensive roasts--shoulders of lamb, veal or pork. You can roast any of these "as is"--that is with the shoulder bone left in. Or you can ask the butcher to remove the bone. The cavity left after boning you can fill with stuffing. A boned, stuffed shoulder roast is much easier to carve than one left in.

I'm telling you this just as a prologue to our Wednesday menu which happens to be another inexpensive October menu featuring stuffed pork shoulder roast served with hot baked sour apples--steaming red apples with a tart flavor set around the edge of the platter like a wreath for the steaming brown roast in the center. For vegetables we're having a combination dish, also baked in the oven--potatoes and onions scalloped together. But wait, I forgot to mention the gravy. Of course, you can have brown pork gravy with the roast, if you like.

After that dinner, none of us will need a hearty dessert. No, we'll probably want something light and hot and something flavorsome to top off the meal. Well, how about being very simple? How about having just tea and orange drop cookies?

So our dinner will be: Stuffed pork shoulder; Hot baked apples; Potatoes and onions scalloped together; Tea and Orange drop cookies. Everything but the tea made in the oven.

Who was it that asked me for a recipe for orange cookies the other day? I can't remember at this minute. But, anyway, here's my answer. Drop cookies flavored with grated orange rind and orange juice. Most busy housekeepers prefer cookies of the dropped rather than the rolled variety because they take so much less time to make. These cookies I'm about to give you take only ten minutes to bake.

First I'll give you the ingredients--just eight of them.

2 tablespoons of grated orange rind
4 tablespoons of butter or other fat
1 cup of sugar
2 eggs
4 tablespoons of orange juice
2 cups of sifted flour
4 teaspoons of baking powder, and
1/2 teaspoon of salt

I'll repeat those eight ingredients. (Repeat.)

First thing, cream together the grated orange rind, the butter and the sugar. Add the well-beaten eggs and the orange juice. Then the flour, baking powder and salt, which have been sifted together. Drop the batter by spoonfuls onto a greased baking sheet and bake in a moderately hot oven (375 degrees to 400 degrees F.) for about ten minutes.

That's all. Just as easy as--

Dear me. I almost said it. I almost said as easy as pie--an expression I intend to avoid in the future. Whenever my mail comes in I doubt the truth of these good old sayings. My friends who write me seem to have more trouble making pie successfully than in doing any other cooking process. For example, a friend in La Fayette, New York, is having trouble with her cream pies--lemon pies, chocolate pies, coconut pies and just plain cream pies. She says that after the pie stands a short time the filling becomes soft and watery under the meringue. What's the trouble? Maybe it's the recipe you're using. Maybe your recipe calls for too much sugar. Excess sugar makes a soft or runny pie filling. That might be the trouble with your cream or coconut pie.

Another reason for water under the meringue is that the meringue isn't sufficiently cooked. The uncooked white of egg combined with the sugar makes a watery sirup over the pie filling and thins the filling if allowed to stand long.

As for the chocolate and lemon pie, the acid in the mixture may be the trouble. When acids are cooked with starch, say the chemists, the resulting mixture will be thinner than a mixture made with the same amount of starch and liquid <u>without</u> the acid. Of course, acid is present in lemon juice and other fruit juices. It's also present in chocolate to a slight degree. So, instead of cooking the starch mixture with the lemon or the chocolate, you add these just as you take the filling from the fire. Then the acid won't have time to make the mixture soft and runny.

A Minnesota homemaker writes that her fruit pies, such as apple, rhubarb and so on, have doughy crusts. She wants to know how to avoid a sticky, soggy undercrust.

The Recipe Lady advises pre-baking the lower crust. Her directions are all in the green radio cookbook on page 103. If you have any pie troubles, better read the directions on that page. Another way to avoid a soft lower crust is to heat the filling before you pour it on the cooked crust. This is especially successful with custard pie.

A third letter asks how to cut the shortening into the dry ingredients in making pie dough. The old-fashioned way to mix fat and flour was with the finger tips. Some modern cooks still like this method. Others use a fork for the purpose, or two knives, or a simple little device known as a pastry blender, or even a biscuit cutter. One good cook I know uses her electric beater at low speed for cutting in shortening. She says it takes just a jiffy. When the shortening is evenly distributed through the flour, the mixture will look like coarse meal. Then you can add the liquid, using a fork to mix it into pastry dough. Use no more water than absolutely necessary to make a stiff dough.

There. If you have more pie questions, write me. Pie has been called the Great American Dessert. So all of us American housewives who make it, ought to do it to perfection.